



Tom Barrett
Mayor

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Administration



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Milwaukee Health Department Awarded \$7.5 Million to Protect Children from Lead Exposure

Funding will assist Lead Program to continue progress in eradicating lead poisoning in Milwaukee

Mayor Tom Barrett and Health Commissioner Bevan K. Baker, CHE announced today that the Department of Housing and Urban Development has awarded the City of Milwaukee Health Department's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program three federal grants totaling close to \$7.5 million. \$3 million has been allocated to conduct lead hazard reduction in 870 privately owned, low-income housing units over a 24-month period; \$4 million has additionally been awarded to support large cities like Milwaukee in their goal to eradicate childhood lead poisoning by 2010 by supporting lead hazard reduction in 1,295 housing units and \$419,309 has been awarded to support an education, screening and housing advocacy project in Milwaukee's highest-risk neighborhoods on the north side.

Over the past eight years, Milwaukee has seen a significant reduction in the number of its lead-poisoned children. Between the years of 1995-2003, lead poisoning rates in Milwaukee dropped from 39.7% to 11.4%. While lead poisoning rates continue to decrease in Milwaukee, we know that the prevalence in our community far exceeds the national rate of 2.2% especially in high risk Milwaukee neighborhoods where prevalence rates reach 40%," said Health Commissioner Bevan K. Baker, CHE.

Lead poisoning is the most pervasive and serious disease of environmental origin for young children in the United States. Lead is particularly harmful to the developing brains and nervous systems of fetuses, newborns and young children. The potential effects of even low lead level poisoning include developmental delay, low IQ, hyperactivity, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, impaired hearing and stunted growth.

"Milwaukee's Lead Program has established a model to reduce lead poisoning in children through community and housing-based intervention that has been replicated nation-wide," said Mayor Barrett. "There is still much work to be done in our community, and this funding will help us reach our goal to keep kids lead-safe."